

Remarks

Claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-20 were pending. Claims 6, 12, and 15-20 have been canceled. Claims 1 and 7-8 have been amended and claims 21-23 have been added.

The Official Action rejects the claims under §112, first paragraph and objects to the specification because the claims referred to ends that were bent twice. This terminology has been removed and withdrawal of the rejection and objection is respectfully requested.

The Official Action further rejects the claims under §112, first paragraph. Each of the criticisms has been carefully considered and the claims have been amended responsively (or canceled) so that the claims will be understood by one of skill in the art when read in light of the specification.

In response to the comments in paragraph 12 of the Official Action, please note that the claims provide that the fill comprises a further metal layer. The "further" metal layer is self defining and distinguished from the other metal layers by the term "further," especially when read in light of the specification by one of skill in the art.

Claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-20 were rejected as unpatentable over ROEBROEKS WO 02/078950 and claim 10 was rejected further in view of LAMBING 5,160,771. The claims have been amended and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

With regard to amended claim 1, ROEBROEKS does not disclose a fill that comprises at least one further metal layer, where the fill is spaced from the mutually overlapping ends and has a thickness such that at the location of the fill the laminate has a thickness equal to a thickness of the laminate at the mutually overlapping ends. ROEBROEKS does not disclose a metal layer that is a fill; as indicated in the Official Action, the "fill" in ROEBROEKS is the glue 12. This "fill" is not spaced from the mutually overlapping ends; it is among and directly contacting the overlapping ends. Further, the thickness of the laminate is different at the locations of the "fill" and the overlapping ends.

The Official Action indicates at the top of page 7 that one of skill in the art would vary the thickness of the fill in order to provide the desired profile. However, the fill in ROEBROEKS is the glue that holds the overlapping ends together and it is not clear how less glue would still be effective for its intended purpose, or why one of skill in the art would use more or less glue when there is no suggestion in ROEBROEKS that there is any benefit to doing so. Clearly, the uneven profile of the laminate in ROEBROEKS is acceptable to ROEBROEKS and one of skill in the art would not learn here that there is any reason for changing the amount of glue to vary the profile of the laminate.

Accordingly, the amended claims avoid the rejections of record.

New claim 22 has been added and consideration and allowance of the new claim is respectfully requested. Support for the join and fill regions is found in Figure 1. Please note that the use of numbers in the claim is acceptable and, of course, they are not limitations. As explained above, ROEBROEKS does not disclose the claimed fill comprising a further metal layer, where the fill is between two of the metal layers and spaced laterally from the mutually overlapping ends, and where the fill has a thickness such that in the fill region the laminate has a thickness equal to a thickness of the laminate in the join region.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The applicant has suggested that any further formal matters that need to be resolved may be more easily resolved via a telephone interview. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully asked to call the undersigned so that such remaining formal matters may be discussed and resolved.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment

to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

_____/Thomas W. Perkins/_____
Thomas W. Perkins, Reg. No. 33,027
209 Madison Street, Suite 500
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

TWP/fb